



PARK SLOPE JEWISH CENTER

December 29, 2017-January 6, 2018 | 11-19 Tevet 5778
Parashat Vayechi

Friday, December 29 11 Tevet				Parashat Vayechi Saturday, December 30 12 Tevet		
Candle Lighting 4:19PM Kabbalat Shabbat with Freddie Brooks 6:30PM				Shacharit 10:00AM		
Sunday December 31 13 Tevet	Monday January 1 14 Tevet	Tuesday January 2 15 Tevet	Wednesday January 3 16 Tevet	Thursday January 4 17 Tevet	Friday January 5 18 Tevet	Saturday January 6 19 Tevet
	Office Closed	Hebrew School 4:00PM	Morning Minyan 7:15AM Hebrew School 4:00PM Geshet 6:15PM		It's Friday Music Class 10:00AM Candle Lighting 4:25PM Lev Tahor with Speaker Pam Laskin 6:30PM	<i>Shabbat Shemot</i> Shacharit 10:00AM Naomi Heffez Bat Mitzvah Tot Shabbat/Mini Minyan 11:15AM Jr. Congregation 11:15AM Mishneh Torah - Laws of Teshuvah 1:20PM
Park Slope Jewish Center 1320 Eighth Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215 (718) 768-1453 Office hours: M-Th 9AM-5PM, F 9AM-2PM www.psjc.org email: office@psjc.org				Rabbi Carie Carter, PSJC's Rabbi (rabbicarie@psjc.org) Ellen Brickman, President (president@psjc.org) Elana Ayalon, Director of Administration (office@psjc.org) Aileen Heiman, Director of Youth Education (aileen.heiman@psjc.org) For questions about Accessibility (inclusion@psjc.org)		

HaMakom Yenachem

Our condolences go to:

Alexandra Aron and her family on the death of Alexandra's father, **Alan Milford Aron**, z"l.

Gary and Ellen Briefel on the death of Gary's brother, **Dennis Briefel**, z"l.

Steve Elworth and his family on the death of Steve's mother, **Elaine Elworth**, z"l.

Orly Dabush Nitzan and her family on the death of Orly's father, **Shalom Dabush**, z"l.

Debby Gillman and her family on the death of Debbie's father, **Rabbi Neil Gillman**, z"l.

Yahrzeits observed 12-18 Tevet:

Claire Kardeman, mother of Marilyn Kardeman and grandmother of Lianna Su Liping Kardeman; **Joseph Pollack**, father of Diane Burhenne; **Trudy Tursky**, aunt of Marc Korashan. *May their memories be for a blessing.*

G'mach, Hevra Kadisha welcome new members If you are able to cook, deliver meals, visit, attend shiva minyanim, do shmira or tahara for those who have died, and support our members in good and bad times - please contact G'mach and Hevra Kadisha to add your name to the distribution list: gmach@psjc.org or hevraKadisha@psjc.org.

PSJC runs on community participation. If you are interested in: **leading Kabbalat Shabbat/Maariv Services**, email freddie.brooks@psjc.org; **leading Shabbat Morning Services**, email Elizabeth Schnur at davening@psjc.org; **chanting Haftarah**, email Alan Palmer at haftarah@psjc.org. **To request an Aliyah or other honor**, email Rabbi Carter a week in advance (rabbicarie@psjc.org), or notify the usher if you arrive before the Torah Service begins; we honor requests whenever possible. **To usher services**, email Ira Drucker at ira.drucker@psjc.org.



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PJ Library Class: It's Friday!

Friday, January 5, 12, 19 and 26 | 10:00AM | \$12 per class (\$10 per members)

It's Friday! is a series of classes for children 3 and under and their caregivers. Join PSJC Tot Shabbat Leader, Abe, for hands-on exploration of Shabbat and holidays. For more information, www.psjc.org/event/its-friday.html

Lev Tahor Services followed by Potluck Dinner and Talk by Pamela Laskin on her novel *Ronit and Jamil*

Friday, January 5 | 6:30 PM

Come out and sing during services. Following a dairy/pareve potluck dinner, we will listen to Pam lead a discussion of Ronit and Jamil. If you have questions, please lev.tahor@psjc.org. You can sign up for the dinner, <https://tinyurl.com/LevTahor-Jan-5-18>

Mishneh Torah - Laws of Teshuvah

Saturday, January 6 | 1:20PM

When it was written in the 12th Century, Maimonides' Mishneh Torah changed the landscape of Rabbinic literature, and has since served as one of the great authoritative codes of Jewish Law. This is a monthly study session with Rabbi Carter, please email rabbicarie@psjc.org for information about this study group.

Book Discussion - *Two She-Bears*

Saturday, January 13 | 1:30PM

PSJCCers join clinical psychologist, and psychology professor Warren Spielberg and David Cooper will co-lead a discussion about *Two She-Bears* by Meir Shalev. This multigenerational historical novel, set in a rural Israeli village, explores the psychological aspects of violence and masculinity and whether the two are interconnected. BPL has 17 print copies.

Save the Date -- and Get Involved: MLK Day of Service

Sunday, January 14 | 11:00AM-2:00PM

PSJC's Annual MLK Day of Service is gearing up for another year of soup kits, snack kits, knitting, cooking (on and off-site), shul-beautification and more. Perfect for PSJCCers of all ages, we promise plenty of activities to benefit the community and organizations beyond PSJC, like the Brooklyn Family Justice Center, Brooklyn Legal Aid, God's Love We Deliver, HIAS, Methodist Hospital and soup kitchens CHIPS and MASBIA. MLK planners also warmly welcome extra hands in the weeks before the event -- we need your help to make MLK Day great! Contact Helen Zelon, hzelon@gmail.com for details -- and thanks in advance for working hard for a better world.

Rosh Chodesh Shevat Minyan

Wednesday, January 17 | 7:00AM

Kishkush Acharei Kiddush

Saturday, January 20 | 1:00PM

Are you comfortable speaking Hebrew? Do you want a place to speak with other fluent Hebrew speakers? Join us the third Shabbat of the month after services and kiddush where we will have a Shulchan Ivrit - a table to sit around, drink coffee and talk with one another in Hebrew. Those who aren't sure if they are "fluent" or not are more than welcome to join as well! Perfect for fluent Hebrew Speakers. Contact Kishkush.at.PSJC@gmail.com for more details.

Shabbat Shmooze

Saturday, January 20 | 1:30PM

Shabbat Shmooze is a get-together in the home of a PSJC member. Bring a dairy or pareve potluck dish to share. For those participating in the Kishkush Acharei Kiddush first, we look forward to you continuing the conversation at the Shabbat Shmooze afterwards. As usual, the Shabbat Shmooze is a veggie/dairy pot-luck lunch open to the PSJC community.

Got announcements? Email by Monday 5:00PM (office@PSJC.org)



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2020 Bnai Mitzvah Date Selection Meeting

Sunday, January 21 | 11:00AM

Are you expecting to celebrate your child's Bnai Mitzvah @PSJC in 2020? If so, please join us in the PSJC Sanctuary to learn about Bnai Mitzvah at PSJC and the Shaarei Mitzvah program and to begin the process of selecting Bnai Mitzvah dates for 2020. Please RSVP: <https://www.psjc.org/event/2020-bnai-mitzvah-date-selection-meeting.html>. We look forward to seeing you and taking the first step in your journey to become Bar/Bat Mitzvah!

PSJC Annual Meeting and Election of Board of Trustees

Sunday, January 21 | 4:00PM

We hope you will join us for Park Slope Jewish Center's Annual Meeting in the PSJC sanctuary. The meeting will consist of updates from synagogue leadership, Etz Chaim updates, thank yous to the outgoing Board of Trustees, a vote for the new Board of Trustees, minor synagogue business, Q&A.

PSJC Hebrew School Shabbat Dinner

Friday, January 26 | 6:30PM

Parashat Hashavua

Saturday, January 27 | 9:30AM

Get a brief taste of the week's Torah portion with our Rabbinic Intern, Leora Kling Perkins. It's a great lead in to the Shabbat morning services.

Advanced Talmud

Saturday, January 27 | 1:30PM

This class is an on-going self-study group appropriate for people who are proficient in Hebrew and have some prior experience in Gemara study. New students are welcome! Email aronrhalb@gmail.com.

Hebrew Cooking with the Shinshinim!

Sunday, January 28 | 4:00PM-6:00PM

Join our Shinshinim (18 year old Israelis here for a year of service)! Learn to prepare delicious Israeli dishes using Hebrew! Whether you are fluent or don't know Alef from Bet, this will be a great opportunity to pick up some Kitchen-Hebrew and have a great time cooking. This experience is **open to all**, but it is **geared toward elementary and middle school aged children and their families**. And it ends with dinner together, eating "the fruits" of our labor. We will also meet on March 18. A donation of \$5/family/session is requested - just to cover materials. For more information or to RSVP, please contact Rabbi Carter at rabbicarie@psjc.org.

Board Meeting

Wednesday, January 31 | 7:15PM

PSJC Board meetings are open to members in good standing.

PSJC Tzedakah Fair

Sunday, February 4 | 10:00AM-2:00PM

Start saving your quarters today for our Tzedakah Fair, put on by our 6th grade Shaarei Mitzvah students at the beginning of their bnai mitzvah journey. This means it is a great time to start getting into the habit (or continuing it!) of putting a little change in a tzedakah box each week. Then your student will have a bag of coins to bring to the fair to donate to over a dozen organizations!





Parashat Vayechi

Triennial: Genesis 49:1-49:26 | Etz Hayim p.298; Hertz p.183

Haftarah: 1 Kings 2:1-12 | Etz Hayim p.312; Hertz p.191

It seems ironic that Vayechi, the last parasha of the book of Genesis, means 'and he lived' when the most significant events in the parasha are the deaths of Jacob and Joseph! Perhaps Vayechi is inviting us to compare the totality of their lives, and consider the evolution of their characters.

Jacob is the preferred child of his mother, but scrapped and struggled to get his father's favor, birthright, and blessing. As Rachel's first child, Joseph occupies a favored position from birth. But despite his being the 11th son, he receives the customary firstborn double portion as Jacob blesses both Ephraim and Manasseh, promising each a portion of the Land of Israel alongside Joseph's brothers. Both are hated by resentful brothers, and both wind up outside the Land of Israel because of it. Separated from home and family, Jacob in Haran and Joseph in Egypt, they experience deception and servitude. But sustained by dreams that gave them insight into God's plan for them, they emerge triumphant. But despite these similarities, Jacob and Joseph wrestle with very different demons. Jacob's greatest challenge is his lack of faith and ability to calmly accept fate. Instead, he was always striving to control the situation, cover his bases, and flip the script to make sure things turn out his way. Even in the womb, he is working to get ahead. Esau is born first, but Jacob comes out grasping his heel! He buys the birthright with a bowl of pottage and tricks his father into giving him Esau's blessing. In Haran, he turns the tables on Lavan, who had tricked him into working double the years to marry Rachel, by employing an elaborate scheme with striped and spotted sheep and goats. And before confronting Esau again, he is a ball of anxious hyperactivity - dividing his camp in two, sending Esau all kinds of gifts, and praying to God for protection. But Jacob comes to learn that things are beyond his control. His daughter is raped, his sons exact revenge against his will, his beloved wife dies in childbirth, his eldest son sleeps with his concubine, and his beloved son is killed by a goat (or so he thinks). It looks like his life will end in failure, as famine eventually forces his family to leave the promised land.

But we see in our parsha that Jacob learns that things can turn out OK even without his being in control. He says to Joseph: 'I never expected to see you again, and here God has let me see your children as well.' (Genesis 48:11) And recognizing that it was really God, and not his own manipulations that paved his way, he prays that 'The Angel who has redeemed me from all harm- Bless the lads.' (48:16).

Joseph's challenge is the opposite: pride and overconfidence. He is born believing that he is destined for greatness, walking around in his ornate tunic, delivering bad reports about his brothers, and proclaiming, with no embarrassment, his premonition that his brothers and parents would someday bow to him.

It takes suffering for him to learn humility. When he hears of the cupbearer and baker's dreams, he tells them that he has the ability to interpret them, blurring the distinction between his innate abilities and a gift from God. He says to them "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, please." (Genesis 40.8). But after more time in prison he has learned his lesson. When Pharaoh asks him to interpret his dreams he says: "I cannot do it...but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires." (Genesis 41.16) He comes to understand that the gifts he has received are not a source of personal pride; they are a blessing to be shared humbly with others.

The final evidence of his growth comes in this parasha when his brothers, afraid that it is only Jacob being alive that has saved them from Joseph's vengeance, come to ask Joseph for forgiveness. Joseph replies, "Have no fear! Am I a substitute for God? Besides, although you intended me harm, God intended it for good, so as to bring about the present result-the survival of many people."

In the Torah's presentations of Jacob and Joseph, neither starts out as a paragon of virtue. They had lives full of challenges, but ultimately learned the right lessons from them and died at peace with themselves, their families, and God. May we all merit the same.

This weekly commentary on the Torah portion is by **Gabriela Schwartz**, *Conservative Yeshiva Student* from the "Torah Sparks" series produced by the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem. A Haftarah commentary by Rabbi Mordechai Silverstein found at <http://www.conservativeyeshiva.org/torahsparks/>

All congregants and visitors (of all genders) are requested to wear a head covering in the Sanctuary. Cell phones and photography are not permitted in the synagogue during Shabbat. Please also refrain from applause during services.